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Translating the Covenant: The Behavior Analyst as Ambassador and Translator

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Behavior analysts should be sensitive to how others react to and interpret our language because it is inextricably related to our image. Our use of conceptual revision, with such terms as *punishment*, has created communicative confusion and hostility on the part of general and professional audiences we have attempted to influence. We must, therefore, adopt the role of ambassador and translator in the nonbehavioral world. A number of recommendations are offered for promoting, translating, and disseminating behavior analysis.

Key words: language, image, translations, conceptual revisions

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This paper's title is a response to a recurring nightmare I have in which I awake each morning to this headline.

Behavior analysts reported today that they could cure apathy. No one, however, has shown any interest.

Every behavior analyst has been entrusted with a behavioral covenant or binding agreement. Once we commit intellectually to behavior analysis, I believe we must do everything possible to ensure its survival and success, because it offers the public a scientific approach to human behavior that is unrivaled in its effectiveness. However, the acceptance of behavior analysis has fallen short of the mark, in part, because of two highly interrelated issues, our language and image.

There is a zeitgeist within the Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA) that our language and image are causing us difficulties. Many behavior analysts have spoken and written about these problems. Although these problems have been evident for a number of years, they seem to be occupying more and more of our time and energy. Words have the power to incite, comfort, inflame, sooth, excite, calm, prejudice, and assuage. In effect, they set the occasion for behavior. In the case of behavior analysis, our words affect our image and hence our ability to relate to others. The focus of this paper is on how changes in our behavior and language could enhance our image.

I will be addressing the following issues. What is our image in the public arena, among other professions, and in general? What factors influence this image? How are other models viewed? What role does our language play in our image problem and in the failure of others to adopt our methods? How did we come to have these language problems? I examine how the term *punishment,* for example, has hurt us. In discussing what we need to do, I advance the notion of the behavior analyst as ambassador and translator. I then discuss forming alliances with other groups. I conclude with recommendations related to our language and image and for translating and disseminating behavior analysis.

Let me begin with a few observations regarding our strengths. ABA has some of the finest minds in basic and

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I dedicate this paper to the memory of my good friend, Don Hake, who died before giving his ABA presidential address. Don knew something about the need to translate, as evidenced by one of his last papers, "The Basic-Applied Continuum and the Possible Evolution of Human Operant Social and Verbal Behavior" (Hakè, 1982).

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applied science among its members. Many ABA members face politically sensitive issues with considerable courage, grace, and integrity. ABA members represent a significant number of psychological, educational, organizational and human services areas. Few organizations contain such a diverse grouping of interests and disciplines. Yet, we are bound by a common thread—behavior analysis. We share the common goal of improving the human condition through research, training, education, and treatment. We are an organization driven by data and the pursuit of knowledge that emphasizes science and professional issues. Because we have a glorious tradition of respecting each other's right to choose from the myriad of paths that constitute behavioral inquiry, we are a haven for those who seek to produce data-based positive change without compromising their freedom of thought, word, or deed.

WHAT IS OUR IMAGE?

Our image in the public arena speaks to the problem of language. For example, I obtained references to behavior analysis from *The New York Times Index* from 1970 to 1994 (see O'Leary, 1984). Material was obtained from summary references to behavior (e.g., human, changes, modification, analyst, research). Articles about behavior therapy that did not include operant procedures were excluded. Articles were read by me and an undergraduate who had taken a course in behavior analysis. We rated the articles dichotomously as either being basically positive or negative. Interrater agreement was above 90%.

Fifty-one articles appeared. Thirty-six (71%) were basically negative in tone and 15 (29%) were positive. The most frequently discussed subject was the Behavior Research Institute, followed by rights issues regarding the use of behavior modification, and then B. F. Skinner. Procedures such as psychosurgery, drugs, and sensory deprivation were frequently described inaccurately as behavior modification.

My conclusions were: (a) Some behavior analysis efforts have hurt our image; (b) how we portray and present our treatment procedures can greatly influence how they are evaluated; (c) the use of behavior-analytic language with non-behavior analysts can be counterproductive; and (d) we need to educate the public about behavior analysis with language that they comprehend and that communicates the humanness of our efforts. O'Leary (1984) reached similar conclusions regarding the image of behavior therapy after reviewing *The New York Times Index* from 1965 to 1983.

A common strategy for describing us appears to be disparagement. In clinical circles the typical behavior analyst is rated low in therapeutic relationship skills (Kowalski, 1984). What we do is viewed as mundane and limited compared to grander theories in which clients increase their self-understanding as they struggle with the nature of the universe (Goisman, 1988). Even acceptance in a clinical or educational setting can turn into a form of disparagement. We are often seen as the treatment or intervention of last resort and are given extremely difficult behavior to treat. In case conferences, long lists of unsuccessful treatment modalities are followed by a recommendation for a behavioral approach because nothing else has worked (Wolpe, 1986).

In regular educational circles, any methods exclusively associated with behavior analysis are okay for people with disabilities but are to be kept away from normal kids (Fowler, 1991). In the field of special education, we are increasingly being regarded as obsessed with controlling others and devaluing people (Bailey, 1991). To the public, we threaten the belief that complex human behavior cannot be studied scientifically within a system based on natural principles (Hickey, 1994). Our use of these principles to explain the behavior of nonhumans helps to con-

firm this belief. Our critics stereotype us as mechanistic, inhuman, coercive, and bordering on totalitarian (Young & Paterson, 1981).

It may be instructive to consider why psychoanalysis persists despite overwhelming evidence of its ineffectiveness. This was addressed in a recent *Time* cover story entitled "Is Freud Dead?" The answer proposed was that Freud "still managed to create an intellectual edifice that *feels* closer to the experiences of living, and therefore hurting, than any other system currently in play" (*Time,* November 29, 1993, p. 51).

This point is illustrated nicely in *Let Me Hear Your Voice* (1993), Catherine Maurice's best selling book wherein she chronicles how intensive behavioral procedures saved her two children with autism after psychodynamic approaches had failed. She describes the popular perception of the differences in therapists as follows: "The behaviorist is often portrayed as Attila the Hun, while the psychodynamic therapist is the Guru Maharaji. The behaviorist is depicted as practicing a form of child abuse, while the healer-savior presents himself as an angel of love and acceptance, overflowing with mysteriously intuitive 'understanding' of the child" (Maurice, 1993, p. 283).

Although it often seems that behaviorism is particularly susceptible to criticism, we are not alone. Behaviorism, like Darwinism, appears to be more misunderstood and criticized by the public than other sciences. Indeed, although most of us do not understand Einstein's theories, we do not oppose them. Yet, behaviorism and Darwinism are subjected to criticism and scorn, in part, because everyone believes they understand them. As Richard Dawkins, Professor of Zoology at Oxford, said about Darwinism in his foreword to *The Blind Watchmaker,*

> It is, indeed, a remarkably simple theory; childishly so, one would have thought, in comparison with almost all of physics and mathematics. . . . But we have good grounds for believing that this simplicity is deceptive. Never forget that, simple as the theory may seem, nobody thought of it until Darwin and Wallace in the mid-nineteenth century, nearly 300 years after Newton's *Principia,* and more than 2,000 years after Eratosthenes measured the Earth. How could such a simple idea go so long undiscovered by thinkers of the calibre of Newton, Galileo, Descartes, Leibnitz, Hume and Aristotle? (Dawkins, 1987, p. xi)

Stephen Hawking, who holds Newton's chair as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, responded to criticism in a way that sounds all too familiar:

> Maybe I'm being a bit harsh on philosophers, but they have not been very kind to me. My approach has been described as naive and simpleminded. I have been variously called a nominalist, an instrumentalist, a positivist, a realist, and several other ists. The technique seems to be refutation by denigration: If you can attach a label to my approach, you don't have to say what is wrong with it. Surely everyone knows the fatal errors of all those isms. (Hawking, 1993, p. 42)

As Skinner stated, "In my experience the skepticism of psychologists and philosophers about the adequacy of behaviorism is an inverse function of the extent to which they understand it" (Skinner, 1988, p. 472).

HOW DOES OUR LANGUAGE INFLUENCE OUR IMAGE?

Our desire for precision in language and discourse has led to the perception that we are arrogant and abrasive. Historically, we have been a maverick group with an outsider mentality that has been passed to our students. We delight in asking "where are your data?," poking fun at other models, and engaging in vigorous and withering discourse regarding our science. Although this repertoire may have served us well in establishing our field, it may be nonfunctional now. What makes a good behavior analyst can be bad for public relations. What is a blessing for a scientist can be a curse for a disseminator.

As Neuringer (1991) noted, we have a "tendency to maintain that 'our' language is better than others" (p. 5). Our frequent engagement in debates over highly valued concepts such as free-

dom and dignity intimidate prospective consumers (Ackley, 1992) and contribute to our image as self-assured and overly aggressive philosophical purists (Neuringer, 1991). People want to understand their children, not control them or debate how to operationalize choice (Bailey, 1991).

Some nice points about arrogance are made in Randall Stross's 1993 book about Steve Jobs. Stross suggests that there is a fine line between an extreme position and behavior that is merely dynamic and determined. Superconfidence can become arrogance that can result in rigid adherence to an untenable plan. What begins as attention to detail can lead to smothering perfectionism and excessive control. An idea ahead of its time becomes an idea whose time never comes.

Why do smart people do dumb things? Feinberg (1992) suggests three factors.

1. Recklessness. There is a short distance between knowing more than anyone else and believing you know everything.

2. Isolation. Smart people associate almost exclusively with other smart people. This can lead to an unwillingness to recognize the need for change. When smart people are in agreement about a course of action, they tend to stick with it long after others have seen that it is faulty.

3. Feedback deafness. Smart people can become so impatient with those who are slower that they find it impossible to listen to them. Feedback is crucial regardless of how brilliant the originators of the ideas are.

To overcome the perception that we are arrogant and abrasive we should, as Ackley (1992) suggested, end our linguistic jousts wherein sacred terms and values from the verbal community at large are mercilessly dissected and move to a constructive focus on precise methods of promoting behavior analysis.

I am not surprised that most people find the word *behavior* to have a negative connotation. Indeed, think back to the first time you ever heard the word. It was probably "Behave yourself." Hickey (1994) suggests that the word *behavior* has not translated well into common speech because it tends to be used in a subtle, evaluative fashion. When parents ask a babysitter, "How did Bart behave?" they are interested in a description with a meaningful valence. Was he good or was he bad? Or consider the term *behavior problems.* Its ubiquitous use in professional arenas and the popular media has led to the assumption that behavior analysis focuses on bad behavior rather than on all forms of behavior.

CONCEPTUAL CONFUSIONS CAUSED BY BEHAVIORAL LANGUAGE

Although we are not politically correct, we can work at becoming behaviorally correct. This will involve a careful analysis of those aspects of our terminology and image that have always been unpalatable to the public.

In 1990, I published a tongue-in-cheek paper in *The Behavior Analyst* entitled, "Suggested Common North American Translations of Expressions in the Field of Operant Conditioning" (Foxx, 1990). My purpose in doing so was to gently point out to my colleagues that many of our words meant something different to the average person. Consider the following brief sample of translations of behavioral terms: *emit,* a poorly designed baseball glove; *conditioned suppression,* the long-term effects of living in Haiti; *resistance to extinction,* heading south during the ice age; and *continuous reinforcement,* the pillars supporting the Acropolis.

I took a similar approach in my 1992 APA Division 33 Presidential Address.

> Imagine what a mother must be thinking when an ardent behaviorist looks at her and says, "Mrs. Simpson, we'd like to put your son Bart on extinction." Mrs. Simpson is not interested in programming the disappearance of Bart's species; rather, she simply wants his problem behavior treated. Clearly, it is less important that mom knows the name of the process that will

produce the desired change, than that she understands the process.

Although numerous examples of these definitional differences can be found in behavioral language, the word that causes the most problems is "punishment." Can anyone recall any other instance in history where a helping profession offered punishment as a viable treatment option?

Most people do not define or understand punishment behaviorally but rather tend to apply a biblical definition. Recall the wrathful, vengeful God who knew how to punish inappropriate behavior effectively. Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she disobeyed God and looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah. When the world was full of sinners God brought down a flood and wiped out everyone except for Noah, his immediate family, and two of every species. That God knew how to provide negative consequences. (Foxx, 1993, p. 3)

Deitz and Arrington (1983) discuss factors that confuse language use in the analysis of behavior. They trace how behavior analysts often engage in conceptual revisions in order to obtain a more precise and scientific language and cite examples such as punishment and extinction. Our technical language has been constructed via what philosophers call *conceptual revision* (Harzem & Miles, 1978), in that we either invent a new word (e.g., *operant*) or stipulate that an existing word be used in a new way (e.g., *punishment*). Most behavioral terms are borrowed from other fields or originated in everyday language. *Extinction* is an example of a borrowed word. The term is used in almost every verbal community based on a biological definition (Deitz & Arrington, 1983). Extinction in biology is a result or product of the elimination of a species by any number of factors. In behavior analysis, however, extinction is considered to be a process. Yet, even behavior analysts have sometimes used the term *extinction* in its original form as a product—a process Hineline (1980) referred to as "vernacular language patterns" (p. 73) that intrude into technical language.

Deitz and Arrington (1983) utilized the philosophy of Wittgenstein (1953) to reveal that (a) revisions of words such as *punishment* and *extinction* have resulted in misleading changes in the subject matter from that which they ordinarily designated, and (b) these conceptual revisions are not superior to the ordinary uses of these terms. Their functional analysis showed how conceptual revisions can become a source of conceptual or communicative confusion for behavior analysts and the general audiences we are attempting to influence.

Consider *punishment*—a common word that behavior analysts use in an uncommon way. In the everyday world punishment describes a process in which authorities impose designed, unpleasant consequences and express their condemnation of others who have chosen to breach established standards and behavior (Greenawalt, 1983). The dictionary defines punishment as "suffering, pain or loss, that serves as retribution, a penalty inflicted on an offender through judicial procedure, and severe, rough or disastrous treatment" (*Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary,* 1987, p. 955). We, of course, define the word as the presentation of any stimulus contingent on a behavior that decreases the future probability of that behavior. Clearly, someone using the everyday definition who is inexperienced in behavior analysis might have difficulty understanding how a kiss could be punishment (Foxx, 1985).

Deitz and Arrington (1983) identified two difficulties when one borrows from the vernacular for technical purposes. First, their philosophical analyses revealed that by being more restrictive, the revised term may eventually change to an extent that we are no longer studying what was originally of interest. Second, their functional analysis revealed that common everyday language patterns are well established and will predominate regardless of our behavioral revisions.

Watson (1928) perhaps anticipated these problems when he stated "The word punishment should not appear in our dictionaries except as an obsolete word" (p. 63). In their 1991 paper, Skiba and Deno made several important points. First, the term *punishment* is ir-

reversibly contaminated by its associations with colloquial usage and inhumane practice. Second, the terms *aversive* and *punishment* are so rooted in misconception that they confound any discussion of effectiveness and ethics to a point where little discussion or systematic research is possible. Third, our association with and use of the word *punishment* places behavior analysts in the uncomfortable position of defending a term that serves as a discriminative stimulus for the very practices we find abhorrent. Fourth, many have come to regard *aversive* and *punishment* as interchangeable terms that connote inhumane practice. Consider, for example, the nonaversives movement in developmental disabilities. Yet by definition, aversive procedures are only sometimes punishing, because any aversive procedure that fails to decrease behavior would not be properly labeled punishment.

Deitz and Arrington (1983) concluded that conceptual revision in itself is not a bad practice, but fewer problems are created when it only involves inventing new terms or labels. Thus, they recommend that we avoid any conceptual revision that involves changing the meanings of existing words. When it has already occurred (e.g., punishment, extinction), they recommend the invention of a new term.

A number of behavior analysts have suggested that punishment is a terminological liability that is obsolete and unnecessary (e.g., Yulevich & Axelrod, 1983) or that the use of the terms *punishment* and *aversive* be discouraged because they contain excess etymological baggage that contribute to imprecise communication (Skiba & Deno, 1991).

Behavior analysts often overlook the fact that they were reared in verbal communities of everyday language and that they will be influenced by these historical contingencies, even after extensive behavioral retraining (Deitz & Arrington, 1983). Thus, it is unlikely for our behavioral revisions to overcome our prior verbal conditioning. If so, then why should we expect it in others who have had little or no exposure to behavior analysis?

Increasing the stimulus control of terminology over scientific practice requires precise terminology that is free of excess meaning (Harzem & Miles, 1978; Hineline, 1980; Skiba & Deno, 1991; Skinner, 1938, 1957). We must find a substitute term for punishment. Simply put, the conceptual conflict between our usage of the term and society's use is destined to be won by society. Skiba and Deno (1991) utilized Skinner's (1957) analysis of the contingencies that control verbal behavior to make this point convincingly: "When two different meanings are assigned to the same word, the community that can provide the most powerful, immediate and ubiquitous consequences will ultimately determine accepted usage" (p. 301).

I suggest that we follow the approach of Senator George Aiken to the punishment controversy. Aiken suggested ending the Vietnam War by declaring victory and coming home. Let's declare victory and drop the use of the word. Therapeutic punishment would then join such oxymorons as faculty cooperation, educational administration, and of course, jumbo shrimp.

Systems theory tells us that the older the system, the more resistant it is to change, and that closed systems die (Bertalanffy, 1968; Foxx, 1996). Changing our language and translating it is a way of keeping the behavior-analytic system open as it ages. We *can* talk nonbehaviorally to non-behavior analysts without compromising the underlying concepts, principles, and methods that define us. We need, of course, to continue to use behavioral language with each other. Skinner seems to make this case in his 1989 article on the origin of cognitive thought.

People's answers to questions about how they feel or what they are thinking often tell us something about what has happened to them or what they have done. We can understand them better and are more likely to anticipate what they will

> do. The words they use are part of a living language that can be used without embarrassment by cognitive psychologists and behavior analysts alike in their daily lives. But these words cannot be used in their science! (p. 18)

WE DON'T HAVE AN ESTABLISHMENT REPERTOIRE

Nowhere is the importance of language and image illustrated more clearly than in the field of developmental disabilities. It is here that the language, image, and practice of behavior analysis are under relentless assault. Behavior analysts who seek to survive in the field have been forced to renounce, hide, or reject their orientation.

The prevailing philosophical orientation in the field of developmental disabilities during the past decade can be characterized as political correctness embedded in a social values ideology that verges on fanaticism (Foxx, 1994). Thus, "debate is discouraged and professional orientation and behavior, personal and professional language, and valuation of treatment and training goals and methods are continuously scrutinized much more for philosophical propriety than for educational or clinical merit" (Foxx, 1994, p. 4). Not surprisingly, this ideology has created acrimonious divisions within the field (Green & Shane, 1994).

Because individuals with this philosophical orientation are relatively ignorant of science and are susceptible to procedural face validity, postmodernism has found fertile ground within the field of developmental disabilities. It meets all of the current philosophical litmus tests because it stresses participatory action research, outcomes-based education, and qualitative and enthnographic research. Any scientifically based area, such as behavior analysis, is its natural enemy. In a recent speech, a well-known member of the Association for the Severely Handicapped and former behavior analyst summarized the postmodern movement in this way: "In special education there has been a shift away from behaviorism as a fundamental tenet . . . into cognitive based theories, subjectivism, and social construction."

I believe that behavior analysis became mainstream and establishment in the field of developmental disabilities without realizing it. Thus, we were unprepared for the assaults on us, the establishment, by the postmodernists, advocacy groups, and other organizations seeking to retain, regain, or expand their control over the field of developmental disabilities. Because of our history as outsiders, we apparently never developed an establishment repertoire. We also must recognize that these groups are not convinced by data, because they neither understand it nor use it. There is no doubt that these groups intend to remove us from the field of developmental disabilities. That there is support to do so within education and special education should not be surprising. Both tend to view ideological movements like waves crashing upon the rocks. Each wave is approximately 20 years in duration, and once it reaches shore its influence is spent. Indeed, consider the following quote from the chair of a special education department of a major university who received a PhD in behavior analysis: "You get no points in this department for going to ABA."

In "Will the Real Behaviorism Please Stand Up?" Iverson (1994) cites Amsel (1989) in discussing two characteristics of new movements that bear on this discussion. First, advocates of a new movement can gain recognition and approval by defaming a more established one and emphasizing how the two differ. Frequently, misinformation, mischaracterization, and disparagement strategies are employed. Second, the new movement often rediscovers and renames previously validated principles.

It is clear that we currently are not politically correct. Accordingly, some chameleon behavior analysts, particularly those in special education, have abandoned the fold and embraced postmodernism with its accompanying ex-

tremes of advocacy and virulent attacks on behavior analysis and all other sciences. Their behavior can be summed up in the phrase *Accepta pecunaria quisque advocata*—any position for a price.

Over time, words can retain their original denotation or undergo pejoration or melioration. Pejoration is the process by which a word that originally bore positive denotation acquires negative or disparaging meanings with the passage of time. Conversely, melioration is the process by which a word evolves from a negative to positive denotation. Clearly, the word *behaviorism* is undergoing pejoration; only changes in our language and image can reverse this process to one of melioration.

THE BEHAVIOR ANALYST AS AMBASSADOR AND TRANSLATOR

The annual ABA convention is where we come together to enjoy the precision that our behavioral language affords. Each year, it is as if we were all from another planet and come together to find our own kind. We are like a group from the old country that speaks the language of the culture as well as our mother tongue. Away from such gatherings, we need to think of ourselves as behavioral ambassadors and translators.[1]

Behavioral ambassadors and translators speak many languages and are sensitive to how others react to and interpret what is being said. They always consider their listeners' learning history and talk to them in their own language or model. They evaluate what they are intending to say and the impact it might have on the listener before they speak. Their goal is to effectively translate the behavior-analytical model to others.

Some ABA members are already translating. For example, because operant conditioning language can sound unpleasant, animal trainers describe using affective training without the use of punishment (Bailey, 1991). Early in Aubrey Daniels' career, he told managers and supervisors about how behavior management could solve their problems. He was told that the problems related to performance, not behavior. Daniels changed his language and business picked up (cited in Bailey, 1991). Bailey stressed that we need to be user friendly and that we need to communicate with our lay audiences in their language. In an article on jargon, Lindsley (1991) said, a "word may have been fine for technology but could be terrible for application . . . you might have to refine into plain English in order to communicate accurate important facts to your practitioners" (p. 451). Neuringer (1991) said that "Rather than arguing about the best language, all would profit from the more difficult but productive activity of translation" (p. 5). Translation helps broaden the audience. Fowler (1991) suggested that we "find a goodness of fit between our paradigm and language and that of the education majority" (p. 368). Binder (1994b) said we need to identify and adopt the vocabulary of the customer—be it academic jargon, bureaucratese, or just plain English. Over 25 years ago, Wolf and his colleagues set up Achievement Place by teaching prospective houseparents to be warm as well as effective behavior analysts (Wolf, 1978). It has taken a long time, but we may yet find our hearts!

Skinner has many times attempted to translate the language of the mind into behavioral terminology (Neuringer, 1991). Other behavior analysts have attempted translations and integrations to and from behavior analysis to other fields, disciplines, or models. Some examples include "Adlerian Psychology as an Intuitive Operant System" (Pratt, 1985); "Behavioral Formulations of Verbal Behavior in Psychotherapy" (Hamilton, 1988); "On the Roles of

[1] I first heard the term *behavioral ambassador* in a talk by Kent Johnson at the 1994 ABA convention.

Theory in Behavior Analysis" (B. A. Williams, 1986); "On the Advantages and Implications of a Radical Behavioral Treatment of Private Events" (Dougher, 1993); and "The Behavioral and the Mystical: Reflections on Behaviorism and Eastern Thought" (J. L. Williams, 1986).

THE AMBASSADOR-TRANSLATOR REPERTOIRE: THE NATURAL BEHAVIORAL ANALYST

I was first exposed to behavior analysis at the age of 19 when I was working my way through college and found a job as an attendant on one of the first token economy programs (Schaefer & Martin, 1969). The behavioral model made instant sense to me, and it seemed that I never had to look up a definition once I learned it. However, we must recognize that not everyone has a behavioral epiphany!

What makes a good behavioral ambassador and translator? Are special repertoires necessary? I think so (Foxx, 1985). Identifying such repertoires would help to distinguish between the behavioral technologist and the behavioral artist and may explain why some individuals are better disseminators and change agents. We need to determine why two individuals of equivalent academic and professional training and experience are not equally successful in promoting and disseminating behavior analysis. What is it in individuals' learning histories that make them behavioral artists or virtuosos?

Individuals who possess behavioral artistry repertoires appear to be what I term *natural behavior analysts* (Foxx, 1985). Their first exposure to behavior analysis was an "Aha!" experience, because they quickly recognized that they now had a conceptual framework that explained what they had been observing and doing all their lives. These strategies, methods, and procedures now had names and a scientific basis. These individuals truly understand and live the behavioral model because it simply comes naturally. Most important, they know how to translate it. We all know such people.

I call such an artist or virtuoso, a behavioral savant. Their approach to behavior analysis is mainly intuitive or instinctive—they just know if a decision or strategy is correct. They have a marvelous feel for behavior analysis, almost like a musician playing by ear. Other behavior analysts proceed differently, more like pianists following a musical score.[2]

At the other end of the spectrum are individuals who cannot seem to grasp behavior analysis—the behaviorally challenged. In keeping with the current emphasis of political correctness, our approach to the behaviorally challenged (or individuals with behavioral challenges) should be to emphasize inclusion. We should try to find ways of providing the necessary intellectual, conceptual, and linguistic supports to ensure that they reach their fullest behavioral potential. Unfortunately, teaching them behavior analysis is a bit like asking a color-blind person (make that chromatically challenged) to paint a rainbow.

We should recognize that practitioner, teacher, and administrator skills may be as much translation as application. Just because individuals have had extensive academic training does not necessarily mean that they can effectively disseminate it (Foxx, 1996). Although this is a common assumption, academia sometimes emphasizes skills, language, images, and areas that are not very relevant to dissemination. Some behavior analysts may have difficulty translating because as Malott (1992) states, "we train even our applied graduate students to be research scientists . . . to value research highly and to value those who produce it" (p. 85). Then they get jobs "as managers or administrators and find themselves

[2] In their book *Stephen Hawking: A Life in Science* (1992), Michael White and John Gribbin made such a distinction when they discussed the difference between Stephen Hawking's and Roger Penrose's approaches to a problem.

poorly trained to do the job they were not taught to value" (p. 85).

REACHING OUT AND FORMING ALLIANCES

Individuals or groups who do not associate with others often emphasize their differences rather than their similarities. Thus, when groups, camps, or associations become socially independent, the chances of their selecting and cooperating on common goals decreases greatly (Tyron, 1990). If there is anything we and the world should have learned by now, it is the danger of isolationism. We must attempt to forge aliances with other professional and scientific organizations for strategic and political reasons. If one's finances permit, I would like to see every ABA member hold membership in at least one other organization.

By way of example, consider that passage of the American Psychological Association (APA) resolution on facilitated communication (FC) in 1994 was achieved by mainly ABA members. Prior to the APA and our own ABA resolutions, FC was a major source of concern to a substantial number of ABA members. Although such a resolution had been discussed at ABA Council, the timing was not right for the organization to take such a stand. In the interim, a group of us who were also APA Division 33 members (The Division of Mental Retardation and Development Disabilities) sought to have APA adopt a resolution on the lack of scientific validity for FC. Passage of the APA facilitated communication resolution was a team effort by ABA members Gina Green, John Jacobson, Jim Mulick, and myself. It helped lead to the ABA's Executive Council's adoption of the strongest FC resolution yet of any organization.

We should increase our involvement with other disciplines to increase the probability that they will attend to us (Neuringer, 1991). A nice example is provided by Allen, Barone, and Kuhn (1993). Their main point was that "the responsibility for the lack of recognition and integration of applied behavior analysis by pediatricians lies with behavior analysts" (p. 494). Their recommended translation strategies, which are applicable to any field or discipline included: Learn their language; read their journals; get involved in their professional organizations; be willing to consider alternative views and support diversity; be selective in regard to being confident, assertive, and emphasizing your own accomplishments (Green, 1991; Hineline, 1991); when giving an opinion, try to blend your analysis rather than inject it (Stabler, 1988); and keep it simple because behavioral jargon may confuse the audience and be associated with pejorative connotations (Allen et al., 1993). The bottom line is that we want to keep one foot in behavior analysis and one foot out. Essentially, everyone mutinies but no one deserts.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSLATING, PROMOTING, AND DISSEMINATING BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

Emily Dickinson offered some advice about how to shape someone to arrive at the truth.

> Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—
> Success in Circuit lies
> Too bright for our infirm Delight
> the Truth's superb surprise
> As Lightning to the Children eased
> With explanation kind
> The Truth must dazzle gradually
> Or every man be blind— (1973, p. 41)

I offer the following suggestions regarding translating and disseminating behavior analysis.

Scientific words and phrases, like commercial labels, are discriminative stimuli that govern approach and avoidance (Tyron, 1990). Perhaps Skinner knew something when he spoke of reinforcing people rather than behavior. Nevertheless, the purists continued to try to get him to say that behavior was being reinforced. We should follow Skinner's dictate that

you should select words for their effects on the listener, not for their effects on the speaker (Skinner, 1957). And to paraphrase Skinner, the consumer is always right.

Our competitors use attractive language and so must we (Binder, 1994b). We must have a language accepted by a diverse constituency because how others perceive our language shapes much of how they view our values (Fowler, 1991).

We must stop trying to convert people into philosophical behavior analysts. Instead, let us first show them how valuable our procedures are in their terms (Binder, 1994a).

We need to conduct a "front-end analysis with potential consumers to discover exactly what they were looking for, what form it should take, and how it should be packaged and delivered" (Bailey, 1991, p. 446).

We must recognize that people's emotional reactions are critical to successful program adoption and that behaviorally induced resistance to change can sabotage any program via vetoes or required modifications that render it virtually unrecognizable (Backer, Liberman, & Kuehnel, 1986).

We need to consider developing positive setting conditions: Consumers relate favorably to someone who is likable and positive (Cullen & Wright, 1978). "Personal contact as an implementation strategy is perhaps the best-validated principle in the entire literature on knowledge transfer and organizational change" (Backer et al., 1986, p. 113).

We must recognize that innovators are frequently not good disseminators and that many scholars find dissemination to be a base activity and a dirty word because it becomes promotion (Sherman, 1992). Indeed, many academics and practitioners simply view marketing as beneath them (Binder, 1994b). Yet, dissemination creates a market for scientific discoveries. We must not devalue dissemination (Gerald Shook, personal communication, 1995).

We should develop and exert referent rather than expert influence (Fantuzzo & Atkins, 1992). Referent influence is an acknowledgment that the consumer and behavior analyst share similar attitudes, beliefs, and values (e.g., about the change process). Expert influence occurs when the behavior analyst has knowledge and skills the consumer wishes to obtain. Referent influence is much more useful in changing practices and creating a market for services than is expert influence (Fantuzzo & Atkins, 1992).

Let us consider dropping the word *technology*. I believe it contributes to our image problem. People don't like this word applied to their behavior. At the extreme end, consider the letter from the Unabomber that was printed on the front page of *The New York Times*. He said, "All the university people whom we have attacked have been specialists in technical fields. (We consider certain areas of applied psychology, such as behavior modification, to be technical fields.)" (*The New York Times*, April 26, 1995, p. 1). The implication is that we are technological and hence worthy of attack. Aubrey Daniels said at the 1994 ABA convention, "Business does not buy technology, they buy solutions." Indeed, a major portion of a 1991 *JABA* issue was dedicated to the question: Are we technological to a fault? In that issue, Lindsley said, "It could be that a technology has only technical jargon, but that a profession has both technical jargon and a set of plain English equivalents to use when translating methods or results to patients and clients. The development of accurate, comfortable application names may be one of the most important steps in moving from a technology to a profession" (Lindsley, 1991, p. 450).

It is time for a clarification of terms and concepts. We must seek terms that generate empirical investigation rather than controversy. A detailed analysis of conceptually revised words followed by new definitions could eliminate much of the confusion of explaining

behavior analysis to others. To that end, I have appointed a Presidential Advisory Group to develop plans and strategies for an ABA Consensus Conference on Nomenclature.

We must improve our public media image, because it has been more negative than positive. I believe that we should regularly use a portion of our budget to achieve the goal of promoting positive and accurate mention in the media. When ABA's finances permit, I support the hiring of a public relations specialist who would work under the direction of the ABA Executive Director and Council.

We must guard against inadvertently confirming people's negative images of us. Cataldo and Brady (1994) suggested that if how we talk about what we do influences our behavior, then we could easily unknowingly treat others in the ways they attribute to us.

Let's try not to punish translators. When someone attempts a translation, let us be mindful of Lindsley's words that "When the new word is in place you are punished by your old friends in the technology for abandoning their jargon, rather than 'selling' it to the public" (Lindsley, 1991, p. 453).

We must build partnerships with other organizations and associations by focusing on common goals. Each ABA member has to link to other groups in order to make them aware of how valuable ABA is (Fowler, 1991). I recommend that we consider having a summit each year (preferably at ABA) in which behavior analysts who hold elective office in other organizations meet with the ABA Council to plan long-range cooperative efforts among organizations. Part of this effort would include ensuring the election of behavior analysts in non-ABA organizations. As Brandon Greene said, "The world is run by people who show up."

We must recognize that some people may simply not be able to understand and utilize behavior analysis well (Bailey, 1991).

We should recognize that many of our consumers (e.g., educators) rarely demand evidence of the effectiveness of any approach.

We must free our ABA practitioners of any guilt when they talk nonbehaviorally to non-behavior analysts as a survival mechanism.

We must use translation, image repair, and alliance-building strategies to eliminate the conditions wherein a substantial number of our members have been forced to go underground or become closet behavior analysts at their worksites. I look forward to the day when we won't read statements such as, "A colleague took me aside and advised me that such an open expression of behavioristic affiliations might not be prudent" (Hickey, 1991, p. 150). Or, "I am a closet behavioral technologist (necessary to survival within the current educational reform zeitgeist)" (Sharpe, 1994, p. 14).

We need to determine what constitutes effective dissemination skills, teach those skills, and reinforce that behavior. Effective dissemination is as important to ABA as scientific discovery. If we cannot disseminate, there is little reason to keep discovering (Gerald Shook, personal communication, 1995).

An effective integration of a number of these points is illustrated by *Toilet Training in Less Than a Day* (Azrin & Foxx, 1974), which was written for parents and has sold over two million copies in the United States as well as being translated into seven other languages. Azrin and I sought to solve a well-defined specific problem by applying general principles and procedures using language that was understandable and acceptable. Consider the following quote from the preface:

> No single theoretical orientation is followed exclusively. The procedure borrows heavily from the many different approaches to children. We have utilized the psychoanalytic emphasis in the possible effect of harsh toilet training to later personality by making the experience a pleasant one. We have taken advantage of the medical knowledge about toilet training by not advocating training until the child is physically ready. We have acknowledged the importance of Pavlovian learning by ensuring the association of

sphincter relaxation with the potty chair stimuli. We have incorporated the role of operant learning by arranging for many types of reinforcers to followed desired responses. We have included imitation and social influence by use of a doll that wets and by making the training a social experience. (Azrin & Foxx, 1974, pp. 10–11)

Overcorrection (Foxx & Azrin, 1973) provides yet another example. Initially, we called it restitution (Foxx & Azrin, 1972) but rejected this label because it sounded too much like retribution. Azrin and I always knew that overcorrection was functionally punishment (Foxx & Bechtel, 1983). Yet, even in 1972, we did not want it labeled as punishment. Its rapid acceptance and utilization seem to support our logic.

CONCLUSIONS

Stephen Hawking's book, *A Brief History of Time* (1988), has sold over 5.5 million copies and has been translated into 33 languages. He charts a nice course for us. "If we do discover a complete theory, it should in time be understandable in broad principle by everyone, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion" (Hawking, 1988).

I am encouraged by the future and our place in it. Technology is advancing at warp speed while people remain confused about their behavior. The busier people become and the more their lives are simplified by machines, the more time they have to realize how little control they have in their lives. The world has never needed us more. We see all around us the normalizing of pathology, that dysfunctional is functional, and that what is killing us is behavior, be it AIDS, smoking, poor diet, lack of exercise, alcohol, or violence in all forms. Yet, because our image is inextricably tied to our language, we cannot help if no one is listening. We must, therefore, create a behavioral retronym that captures our true image.

Retronyms are words that are reshaped to fit the times. They are new terms for old things, phrases made necessary to distinguish existing objects or ideas from innovations that improve or replace them. They can tell much about a field's growth and contributions. Some common examples include how electronic mail begat snail mail or hard mail, and how black-and-white TV was necessitated by the invention of color TV. In behaviorism, we have radical behaviorism, methodological behaviorism, neobehaviorism, and cognitive behaviorism. I propose another term. Not humble behaviorism, because even though Neuringer's (1991) points were very cogent his term distracted from his message. Rather, I would add to our behaviorism retronym list a word that has as its synonyms: benevolent, sympathetic, understanding, compassionate, gracious, tolerant, open-minded, altruistic, cordial, and helpful. That word is *humane.*

In closing, I believe that the best we should perhaps expect from the world and the culture is expressed by Meatloaf in a song from his "Bat Out of Hell" album. I believe we should be quite satisfied if the nonbehavioral world says to behavior analysis

I want you
I need you
There ain't no way I'm ever going to love you
But don't feel sad
'Cause two out of three ain't bad

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